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JUNE 11, 1978 US ambassador West met with Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia

Note: Prince Abdullah was the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia 1982–2005 and then the king of Saudi Arabia from 2005 to 2015.

Source: wikileaks.Org/plusd/cables/1978JIDDA04328_d.html

SAG = Saudi Arabian government

1. On June 4 ambassador met with second deputy prime minister and commander of national guard, Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, and presented letter from president conveying U.S. willingness to continue the modernization program with Saudi National Guard. In contrast to his last meeting with ambassador in May, Prince Abdullah was relaxed, even buoyant. he praised efforts made by president and secretary on behalf of F-15 sale. He said congressional decision to permit sale was a success for president and American people. Decision released hope that Jewish lobby had placed around American neck. He described how he and many other Saudis stayed up late into the night by their radios awaiting outcome of Senate vote. He said there was great celebration following vote. The outcome once and for all closed path for enemies of Saudi–American friendship to gloat that U.S. was not "real" friend. He stressed that number of planes was not important but moral victory was. He confessed there had been one point in time when he and other Saudi officials had regretted ever asking for F-15's. When it looked as if we were losing, we were faced with possibility of appearing as fools in front of our people; but victory removed doubts which our people had in placing our trust and friendship in U.S.

2. Prince Abdullah then turned to Africa. He praised U.S. reaction to Cubans and Russians in Zaire. He said Saudis are now looking at U.S. in different way. Before, we appeared blindfolded and allowed Russians to do whatever they wished in Afghanistan and South Yemen. Now U.S. has changed. The U.S. we knew and like is a strong U.S. that stands up in face of Communism.

3. Prince Abdullah asked ambassador for our view of new leadership in Afghanistan. He said new leaders had written to convince SAG that they were true Moslems, not Communists. He said they denied emphatically that they are involved with Soviets. Prince confided that SAG did not believe them and did not trust motives of new leaders.

4. Abdullah also expressed SAG concern for Shah of Iran. He said communists are stirring up trouble in Iran to topple Shah and that if anything happened to Shah, whole Gulf area would be in great danger. Ambassador assured Abdullah that US also was concerned with developments both in Afghanistan and Iran and that he would keep SAG informed.

West

March 8, 1979 US Ambassador West met Prince Abdullah

The element of friendship has become part of our blood

Frank talk from Prince Abdallah date:1979 march 8 canonical id:1979jiddat01947_e

sag= Saudi Arabian government

1. (c - entire text)

2. Summary. Accompanied by special counselor Sabbagh, ambassador visited second deputy prime minister and national guard commander prince Abdallah in Jidda on March 6. Prince Abdallah spoke with candor about doubts in the region on the value of a close relationship with the US. He stated that Soviet aim in Yemen was to get the US and Saudi Arabia involved in an interminable quagmire and called for a joint effort to arm and support the Yemenis to insure that it is the Russians and their allies who find themselves in a graveyard. Turning to the Arab-Israeli question, Prince Abdallah emphasized the importance of the Palestinians to any Middle East peace and asked the US to advise Israel to resolve the conflict while the Arab moderates remain moderate and before it is too late. Before the discussion could be concluded, an aide informed Prince Abdallah that the king requested his presence. Prince Abdallah apologized and it was decided to resume the session in near future so that the ambassador could comment on the prince's remarks. End summary.

3. Taking advantage of his presence in Jidda (king Khalid and almost the entire government will be in the western province until march 12), ambassador called on prince Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz, second deputy prime minister and commander of the national guard on March 6. He was accompanied by special counselor Sabbagh and political officer.

4. Following opening pleasantries and favorable comment on the continued progress being achieved by the Saudi national guard modernization program under the direction of Bgen Hadacheck, ambassador informed prince Abdallah that he would soon be returning to Washington and asked him if he had any message he wished him to take back to president carter. Prince Abdallah laughed and said he had several things on his mind. Ambassador continued by reviewing the actions US has taken in recent days to support Saudi Arabia in the face of the South Yemeni attack on the YAR. He noted that the president had recently instructed him to reiterate to the Crown Prince our commitment to the security and well-being of Saudi Arabia and that we intend to live up to this in all possible ways. Today, US and Saudi Arabia are partners for peace and prosperity and their interests are so entwined that they should not be separated. Ambassador expressed regret HRH was absent during defense Secretary Brown's February visit but noted that the meeting with deputy national guard commander prince Badr had been very constructive. Ambassador said he felt that assurances on Saudi security made by secretary brown and the joint planning effort which resulted from his visit are evidence of the strength, durability and, most importantly, the reliability of the U.S. commitment.

5. Prince Abdallah nodded his agreement and said that he wished to thank the ambassador and through him, the president, for all that has happened in the way of support for Saudi Arabia. In addition, he said that he had a comment to make.

6. Prince Abdallah turned to the ambassador and in warm, sincere tones told him: You know me. Your friend who does not open his heart genuinely to you is not a true friend. I am proud to say that i am a Bedouin who speaks the truth. The friendship between your country and ours goes back over fifty years and has been through all sorts of upheavals. The element of friendship has become part of our blood. In addition, our interests have become intertwined. As you know, the waves carry a lot of propaganda. You must hear a lot of this, but there is always an element of reality within it. I feel I must tell you some of these things as a friend.

On the value of American friendship -

7. Prince Abdallah then remarked generally on the deteriorating security situation in the middle east and elsewhere. He noted that all that has been going on in the horn, in Afghanistan, in Iran and now even in the Yemen is coming close to quote choking us unquote. He continued: I am enumerating all of these events because they are all things we warned you (the U.S.) about. If you had bestirred yourselves when the fires started, the subsequent events would not have taken place. With all due respect, some of the actions of the congress are not in the interests of the U.S. If timely action had been taken, we would not find ourselves in the straits we find ourselves in now.

8. Prince Abdallah noted that he had recently visited Syria and Iraq. Ostensibly, the purpose of the trip was hunting but he visited friends as well. (fyi: Unpublicized three-week trip took place in February and was reason for Abdallah's absence during brown visit. End fyi.) he stated much of the discussion with these friends was about the two superpowers.

9. Prince Abdallah said he was a strong advocate of friendship with the U.S. And argued with his friends about advantages of ties with the U.S. Versus ties with the soviet union and the superiority of the U.S. System. He said his friends accepted the latter point but questioned the value of ties to the U.S. They said that their countries are forced to play ball with the Russians because at least they get more than they would get from the U.S. Saudi Arabia, to them, proves this point. Although Saudi Arabia is the closest friend of the U.S., what does it get from the Americans? Saudi Arabia does not have to beg for arms but arms are not given to them freely, either. It pays for them in cash. It pays for the arms which in fact protect not only Saudi interests in the area but American interests as well.

10. They also pointed to U.S. Treatment of the Shah. He was known as America's best and closest ally, but the moment he was gone the Americans started carving the malignancies. Prince Abdallah quoted the lines from the Koran which say: "be merciful to him who has had eminence and has come down." the Iraqi and Syrian friends concluded: If the Americans deal with you, their closest friends, in this way, how can we expect them to deal with us who are less friendly? Nevertheless, they told prince Abdallah that if the U.S. Really wants to extend the hand of friendship, then they are ready. On the arms of the soviet union.

11. Prince Abdallah then turned his attention to the growing debate within the kingdom on relations with the soviet union and the implications of the recent events in Yemen. He said that at present even the most intelligent people in the kingdom and those who have the highest regard for the U.S. Are now saying: Why not have contacts with the USSR? Prince Abdallah emphasized that the people speaking are all wise and educated citizens, not illiterates. They look to what is happening in Yemen and they question why Saudi Arabia has placed exclusive reliance on the U.S.

12. Indicating that he did not wish to flog a dead horse, prince Abdallah remarked that Saudi Arabia has been pleading with the U.S. For over a year to do something in Yemen. However, it took months to even obtain authorization for some weapons. Look at what is happening now. There is a fire raging in our back yard. If it was the work solely of those in aden, we could take care of them. But we know who is behind them: The Russians, the Cubans, the east Germans and even the Ethiopians* we know--and i know--that it is a concerted plan. Suggesting that soviet prestige suffered because of the lack of a response when china invaded Vietnam, prince Abdallah said that it was his personal conviction that the USSR opened up the Yemen front not only to raise its prestige in the communist world but to involve the U.S. And Saudi Arabia in what he termed an interminable quagmire. On the U.S./Saudi response to the Yemen quagmire.

13. With considerable firmness, prince Abdallah told the ambassador: I bid nothing. My view is that the soviet union is sucking us into the Yemen. My belief is that the Yemen is a graveyard. The Turks suffered there; they were almost exterminated. Nasser also tried for his fortune and left almost without his pants. My conviction is that the U.S. And Saudi Arabia should give the Yemenis arms and money and suck the other side into the quagmire--to cause the Russians, the Cubans, the East Germans and the Ethiopians to fall into that graveyard.

14. Prince Abdallah stated that the success of this strategy is, of course, predicated on our joint cooperation in executing this plan. In addition, we (Saudi Arabia) must strengthen ourselves sufficiently internally. He added that if the soviets suffer a licking in Yemen, then they won't be inclined to cause trouble in other areas in the middle east. Urging that the U.S. Be forthcoming in its assistance, he suggested that thus far the U.S. Had given only "children's toys" when compared against the need. What can bazookas and guns do against the might of the USSR? He suggested that instead of giving assistance like this out of an eye-dropper, why not throw in our joint weight? Once again, he stressed that he was speaking frankly and was being frank because he sincerely believes that each hour which passes is against our mutual interest. The Arab-Israeli question -

15. Prince Abdallah next turned his attention to the Arab-Israeli issue. He praised the president's efforts and his commitment to human rights. He asked, however, where were the rights for the people who had been dispersed from Palestine? Where was justice? Until recently, no Arab ever thought about recognizing the existence of Israel. Now the idea exists and is expressed but this recognition should be predicated on giving the Palestinians their rights. He said that president Sadat had gone to the ultimate extreme by going to Jerusalem and had lost a lot of respect in the area for his effort. What did he achieve? Prince Abdallah stated that it was his personal conviction that president Sadat was relying on the sense of justice of the American people and their president. He went to Jerusalem expecting full American support, But failed to achieve it. He noted the pitiful condition of the Palestinians at the present time and described the depth of despair to which these people have been pushed and said we should not malign them when they act out of desperation.

16. Prince Abdallah emphasized that if America is truly a friend, it must do something positive about the Palestinians. He said he wished the U.S. Would advise Israel that what the Arabs are willing to accept today is only one quarter of what they consider their rights. If the issue is unresolved, however, then the Arabs will want not only their full rights but something else. Even the American people would suffer from such a turn of events and he expressed the fear that the American public might even turn against Israel.

17. At this point, an aide entered the majlis and told the prince that the king wished to see him. The ambassador said he had enjoyed the discussion and asked if it might be continued at a later date as he wished to comment on the prince's remarks. Prince Abdallah said he had enjoyed the meeting, as well, and hoped discussion could be resumed prior to his return to Riyadh. A tentative appointment was arranged for march 10.

18. Comment. One cannot fail to be impressed with prince Abdallah. He exudes qualities of generosity, piety and leadership without the slightest hint of arrogance, and it is easy to understand why he is revered by the Saudi national guard. An increasingly important figure in the Saudi political spectrum, prince Abdallah has recently increased his activities in his capacity as second deputy prime minister rather than concentrating on national guard affairs exclusively. His remarks on Yemen and the role of the Palestinians in any middle east peace warrant serious consideration. End comment.

West